

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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July 13, 2021

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TO: Presidents and Chancellors
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FROM: Harrison Keller, Ph.D. 
Commissioner of Higher Education

SUBJECT: Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funding

Governor Greg Abbott and legislative leadership recently announced the State of Texas will invest \$94.6 million in federal stimulus funding from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund to support higher education. This funding is in addition to the \$175 million in GEER previously allocated to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to support Texas higher education in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Coordinating Board is grateful for the leadership of Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan, and the entire Texas Legislature for this demonstrated commitment to higher education.

This additional GEER funding will play an important role as Texas transitions from pandemic response to economic recovery. In particular, there are significant gaps between the skills and credentials many Texans possess and the current and emerging needs of employers. Texas higher education will play a central role in addressing these issues and powering our state's talent pipeline.

Attached you will find a document with additional details about implementation of these GEER funds. We have appreciated the collaborative work with system and institutional partners over the last year in allocating the first round of GEER funding. We are excited to continue working with each of you to deploy these new funds effectively and efficiently.

We will continue to communicate additional information as it becomes available.

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF (GEER) FUNDING

July 2021



In June 2021, Governor Greg Abbott and legislative leadership announced the State of Texas will invest an additional \$94.6 million in federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds to support Texas higher education. Last year, \$175 million in GEER funding was allocated to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide critical support for higher education. While the Coordinating Board works to refine additional details, this next round of funding will continue to provide meaningful support to ensure Texas students have the skills they need for tomorrow's jobs, while expanding access for adults, transfer, and low-income students, and increasing institutions' capacity to deliver high-value postsecondary programs. The \$94.6 million includes the following initiatives:

EXPANDING CAPACITY FOR HIGH-DEMAND, HIGH-VALUE EDUCATION | \$48.1M

Institutional Capacity Grants

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated changes in Texas higher education and workforce needs. GEER funding will support grants for public institutions of higher education to establish or expand programs that address workforce demand in high-priority sectors and occupations for regional and state economic development. Grants may be awarded for purposes including:

- Establishing, redesigning, or expanding workforce training programs that lead to postsecondary industry certifications or other credentials for high-demand fields, including up to \$25 million for community, state, and technical colleges dedicated to launching the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) initiative, consistent with provisions of SB 1102 (87R).
- Creating, redesigning, or expanding micro-credentials developed and deployed in consultation with employers, aligned with high-demand career opportunities.
- Supporting institutional data collection, infrastructure, and analytics related to increasing student success initiatives, including recommended course sequencing implementation.
- Incorporating work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities into workforce training programs and short-term educational programs for high-demand fields, in consultation with the Texas Workforce Commission.

Funding will also support establishment of a publicly accessible web-based library of credentials awarded by Texas public and independent institutions of higher education, included in HB 3767 (87R), and technical analyses necessary for the Coordinating Board to support the community college finance commission established by SB 1230 (87R).

FINANCIAL AID & ENROLLMENT SUPPORT | \$28.5M

Texas Reskilling Support Fund Grants 2.0

This funding will supplement initial allocations of GEER funding to support displaced Texas workers who need to reskill or upskill to get back into the workforce, and Texans who have previously stopped out of higher education institutions without completing postsecondary credentials. Grants will be awarded to institutions of higher education to provide essential support to students to accelerate enrollment and facilitate timely completion of credentials.

Financial Aid Pilot Programs

This one-time federal funding presents a unique opportunity for Texas to pilot novel, innovative approaches to provide financial support to critical student populations. Funding will support the development of the following financial aid pilot programs:

- Texas Leadership Scholars Program: A robust scholarship and leadership development program to encourage high-achieving Texas high school students who are low-income to take advantage of premier educational opportunities at public colleges and universities.
- Texas Transfer Grants: Provide portable need-based aid to high-achieving transfer students who are low-income to help mitigate financial barriers to vertical transfer for students.

Student Success & Equity Initiatives

Funding will go toward creating an inventory of effective student success interventions and initiatives that support students' college and career success, especially for African American, Hispanic, and low-income students. These funds will also bolster advising resources and platforms to increase access to critical information and supports that provide for equitable opportunities for students across the state.

MY TEXAS FUTURE | \$10M

Student Engagement and Educator Training

Funding will support the establishment of My Texas Future – a one-stop intake and college and career advising portal for students that features curated resources, virtual and live advisers, and tools for students and families to explore educational and career paths. The state's rich data will be leveraged to identify and engage high-potential students earlier in the educational pipeline. Funding will also be used to enhance training delivered through the Texas OnCourse Academy and bolster partnerships with institutions of higher education for educators, counselors, and college and career advisers in the effective use of My Texas Future resources and in identifying and encouraging student talent.

GRADTX 2.0 EXPANSION | \$4M

Scale the newly relaunched GradTX engagement efforts across the state to re-engage more than four million Texans who have some college but no credential and support them in completing credentials of value so they can contribute to the state's economic recovery.

DATA SECURITY AND ACCESSIBILITY | \$4M

Bolster Tri-Agency data information security and accessibility by supporting the completion of the agency's Legacy Application Portfolio Modernization Project, which will reduce maintenance costs while increasing IT security and user effectiveness, in line with current industry best practices.